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SURPLUS FARM PRODUCTS

A discussion by Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, and Dr. E. W. Gaumnitz, Director of Division of Marketing and Marketing Agreements (and Vice-President of Federal Surplus Commodities Corporation) broadcast in the Department of Agriculture's portion of the National Farm and Home Program, Tuesday, May 16, 1939, by the National Broadcasting Company.

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KADDERLY:

On at least two occasions that I recall at the moment we have told you in this program about the food-stamp plan.....the plan that was announced last March 13 by the Department of Agriculture.....a plan that on the one hand aids needy families get more of the foodstuffs that they should have for an adequate diet.....and on the other aids the farmer by finding a market for more of his surplus products.

This food stamp plan is starting today in Rochester, New York.....first of several cities in which the plan is to be tested.

In the operation of the food stamp plan the Federal Surplus Commodities Corporation.....with the approval of the Secretary of Agriculture.....names the commodities that can be bought with surplus food order stamps.

A few days ago the FSCC issued its first list of these officially designated surplus commodities..... The fact that these commodities are in surplus is of interest to consumers generally.....and two people are here to talk with you about them..... Dr. E. W. Gaumnitz, head of the Department's division of marketing programs.....and Ruth Van Deman of our Bureau of Home Economics.

Usually.....the women come first.....but in this case, Dr. Gaumnitz, we're going to call on you first.....to name the list of the official surplus commodities and to tell us a little about each.

GAUMNITZ:

So far there are eight foods listed as surplus under the food stamp plan. These are butter, shell eggs, oranges, grapefruit, dried prunes, dry edible beans, wheat flour and whole wheat (graham) flour, and corn meal.

All of these eight foods are well-known to consumers throughout the country because they are distributed on a national basis, and may be bought in most any grocery store. These eight agricultural commodities were listed as being in surplus because supplies of each are very plentiful and prices are low.

Here's what the situation looks like in each of the eight foods listed as surplus:

Let's begin with butter -- Supplies have been very big for more than a year. Dairy farmers are now in the spring flush of production and heavy stocks of butter are beginning to move into storage. Prices are a lot lower now than they have been for several years.

Next on the list are eggs -- This is the time of the year when lots of eggs are produced. In fact records kept since 1925 show that the number of eggs produced per farm flock during the first four months of this year has never before been exceeded. And, as a result, egg prices now are averaging lower than they have for some time.

Now, for oranges and grapefruit -- both of these products have been plentiful since last fall when the present marketing season started. In fact this season's crop of citrus fruit is the biggest in the history of the industry. Prices this season have averaged lower than ever before. In fact the price situation is such that growers will have great difficulty in marketing all of the citrus fruit grown this year.

The dried prune situation is also one of heavy supplies and low prices to growers. Estimates show that the surplus of dried prunes amounts to something like sixty million pounds this year. Prices to prune growers are about one-third below the average for the last five seasons.

And now, dry edible beans -- they're harvested in various parts of the United States during the fall months and marketed throughout the entire year. It looks as if there is a surplus of around three hundred and seventy million pounds of dry edible beans for the current marketing year. And, here too, prices are about one-third below the average for the last five years.

I believe the wheat and corn situation is pretty well-known to everybody. Supplies of both are big; and farm prices for these grains are lower than they have been in the last few years.

KADDERLY:

Now that Dr. Gaumnitz has given us some of the supply and price facts on these commodities officially declared in surplus by the Federal Surplus Commodities Corporation, here's Ruth Van Deman, to say a word or two about the food value of each of these eight commodities.

Ruth, shall we start again at the top of the list and work down?

VAN DEMAN:

Before we concentrate on any one of them, Wallace, I'd like to say a word about well-balanced diets in general.

KADDERLY:

Very much in order. Man doesn't live by bread alone.

VAN DEMAN:

Nor by oranges, or dry beans, or prunes.

But sometimes people get so interested in a particular food, they think it's the perfect food, with practically everything in it the human body needs. They get the notion they want to make their whole diet of that one food. Well, when somebody like that comes along, I do a little missionary work.

KADDERLY:

With some of your Bureau of Home Economics bulletins.

VAN DEMAN:

Yes, I hand out a tract or two. For instance that new folder that Rowena Carpenter talked about on May Day---the one called "Well-Nourished Children." That gives in as clear, concise language as I know the reasons for a well-balanced diet---a diet made up of just as many different kinds of foods as it's possible to get. And it tells what the different foods do for the body. It answers the why and the what.

KADDERLY:

And the how much in some cases.

VAN DEMAN:

I brought along a copy, Wallace. I thought you might like to quote this part about eggs. Right there---where that blue mark is.

KADDERLY:

"When eggs are plentiful and cheap, one egg or more a day may well be used for each member of the family, including the eggs used in cooking. They are a good building food, especially rich in iron and vitamin A."

VAN DEMAN:

Now for the citrus fruits, turn back a page or so.

KADDERLY:

"Every day a fruit or a vegetable rich in vitamin C".

VAN DEMAN:

And the first two on the list you notice are oranges and grapefruit. Children under 4 need oranges or grapefruit, or tomatoes every day.

KADDERLY:

The whole fruit or the juice I suppose.

VAN DEMAN:

Yes, either one. They both carry the vitamin C. But of course vitamin C isn't the whole story on citrus fruits. In fact we're hardly more than touching the very highest spots on any of these.

KADDERLY:

What would that mean on prunes?

VAN DEMAN:

Offhand I'd say iron---and vitamin A---and probably some vitamin G, or riboflavin, as it's called now.

KADDERLY:

Very good return for the money though, considering the price per pound.

VAN DEMAN:

Excellent. And the same can be said for whole-wheat flour. It has minerals and vitamins that are lost when the grain's highly milled to make white flour. But all kinds of wheat flour and corn meal are standbys when it comes to furnishing lots of energy for very little money. Wallace, there're some very good lines about bread and cereals in that folder. Think you'd have time to read them?

KADDERLY:

I think so. Where's the place?

VAN DEMAN:

Right there.

KADDERLY:

"A serving of cereal once a day; more than once a day if money is scarce or appetites are large. ---

"Bread at every meal for those who need plenty of energy food, especially children in their teens."

VAN DEMAN:

The whole emphasis there of course is on food for children---well-nourished children. But what's said about food values applies to food for anybody.

KADDERLY:

Well, we've covered all on this list of foods in surplus except dried beans and butter.

VAN DEMAN:

Not a bad combination. Dried beans need some kind of fat for seasoning. But even alone they're one of the many-sided foods---high in calories---high in vegetable protein---and on the list for iron and vitamin B.

KADDERLY:

And butter I know rates high in calories.

VAN DEMAN:

More than just calories. It's calories plus vitamin A if the cows get the right feed. And plus that good flavor that to me always goes with good butter.

KADDERLY:

Yes, there's something about the flavor of good butter that makes it very difficult to do without it.

VAN DEMAN:

You're like the king in the nursery rhyme then - "Nobody could call me a fussy man; but I do like a little bit of butter to my bread."

KADDERLY:

Very nice. And I hope nobody will call me a fussy man if I ask about the supply of this folder on Well-Nourished Children. Plenty of copies still?

VAN DEMAN:

I think so.

KADDERLY:

Very well then. --- Farm and Home friends, as Ruth Van Deman takes leave of us, let me emphasize that copies of this 16-page folder on Well-Nourished Children may be had from the Bureau of Home Economics, Washington, D. C. All you need to do is send a post card, and write on it your name and address and the title "Well-Nourished Children". (Repeat directions.)